

adventures in babysitting by hannahsviolets

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Other, mike is a stancy shipper, past steve/nancy, steve fucking hates billy i cant wait to see him beat his ass, steve is bisexual, the first one deserves to be canon, the ladder is canon, will is gay

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Summary:

A series of one shots surrounding Steve's relationships with each of the kids.

1. mike

If you would have told Steve a year ago that he'd be sitting in an abandoned school bus with a bunch of thirteen year olds, he would've laughed in your face. But here he was, playing with a stick as Dustin, Max and Lucas slept. If only Tommy could see him now.

It'd been a rough day to say the least. They were all covered in dirt and sweat and there'd been at least three times where Steve didn't think they were going to make it out of there. He hadn't said that out loud of course, because whether the kids wanted to admit or not, he was supposed to be the adult here. He was supposed to protect them and take care of them. And like most things in his life, Steve was pretty sure that he was screwing that up.

Max was curled up in a ball on one of the seats, holding her knees to her chest as if it would protect her. (Steve suddenly felt a rush of rage directed towards Billy, wondering how he could have ever hurt the girl.) Dustin and Lucas were sprawled out against the closed side door, their heads resting together. It was so profoundly innocent and sweet and Steve thought that maybe there was still some good left in the world, and that all of it could be found on this bus. Mike was lying down on the floor near the back door, staring up at the ceiling.

When Steve had told the kids to get some rest and that he would keep watch, Mike was the only one who didn't immediately close his eyes. Instead, he scoffed like he normally did whenever Steve did anything and moped off. He knew well enough not to take the attitude of a thirteen year old all that seriously, especially when it was directed at somebody who'd banged his sister, but Steve couldn't help but feel a bit lost. He thought that the other four seemed to like him, and he liked that. After his falling out with Tommy and Carol, to say he wasn't really the most popular guy around was an understatement. He'd been cut from the baseball team, it felt like his parents were on the verge of throwing him out, Nancy had dumped him. But he'd managed to find a friend in Dustin, and then in Lucas, Max and the currently absent Will. And they'd made him feel needed and given him a new purpose in his life and he felt like maybe he wasn't a complete waste of space.

Mike still hadn't warmed up to him, though. It was like everything he said was the wrong thing and just his presence was irritating. (Steve supposed he should've expected that type of reaction – after all, Nancy felt the same way about him now). He felt embarrassingly like a small child, wanting Mike's approval.

"You should get to sleep," Steve said. "Long day tomorrow,"

The irritation in Mike's voice was evident. "Yeah, no thanks,"

"C'mon, man. I'm not so much of a screw up that I'd let you guys get like eaten or something,"

Mike looked at him, his eyebrows raised. "Not everything is about you," he paused. "Especially not this,"

Was he going to open up to him? "Then what is it?"

"You're not with my sister anymore. You don't have to pretend to give a shit,"

Steve's eyes widened, taken aback by the brash statement. "You think I'm doing all this to impress Nancy?"

Mike said nothing.

"Dude, if I was just trying to get laid, I would've quit weeks ago,"

"Gross," said Mike, but the malice had disappeared from his voice.

"Seriously, though," Steve began, a bit quieter than before. "What's wrong? Are you scared?"

"You wish,"

Steve shrugged and broke the stick in his hands in half. "Well, I am,"

"You told Dustin you weren't before," Mike retorted.

"Because that's what Dustin needed to hear. You need to hear the truth, which is that I have no fucking idea what I'm doing,"

A small smile appeared on the boy's face and Steve's chest swelled with pride. "Then why are you doing all this? You know, helping us?"

He'd never been very good at discussing his feelings, but he'd been trying to be since meeting Nancy. He silently wondered if maybe that was why she'd dumped him, because she'd liked the old version of him better. Mike was different though and he seemed to appreciate all of that mushy gushy stuff. "Cause I, you know, I care about you guys. I care about what happens to you. I just – I wanna help out, you know?"

Mike nodded. Neither of them knew what to say, but the silence that fell across the space was more comforting than anything. Steve wanted to know what Mike was thinking – if he thought any better of him than he had moments ago. He felt like an idiot for caring so much about what the middle Wheeler thought of him, and he thought that maybe the Wheeler family just had some sort of hold over him.

"I can't stop thinking about Eleven," said Mike, hardly above a whisper. Steve considered moving closer to him, but didn't want to scare him and shut him up. "Like . . . she's braver than I am, but y'know, she must be scared. And she probably can't sleep,"

"So then you shouldn't be able to sleep either?" asked Steve.

Mike nodded.

"I never met her, but like . . . would she want that? Would she want you to suffer?"

"I only knew her for a week. Sometimes it feels like longer, but sometimes it doesn't,"

"A week can be a long time," Steve stated, pulling his jacket tighter around him. "Will was in the Upside Down for a week and . . . you see what happened there,"

Mike said nothing once more. The whole conversation made Steve think of Nancy, and how he would've given anything for her to never be anything less than happy. Where was she right now? (Besides with

Jonathan, of course.) Was she sad, scared? His heart began to race and he pictured her blinding smile and heard the words "I love you, Steve Harrington" in her sweet voice, although they both knew that the statement was a lie. Whatever, it didn't matter. This wasn't about him.

"Maybe Eleven isn't sleeping not because she's scared, but because she knows that you'll be worrying about her," Steve suggested.

Mike sat up then, leaning his arms against his knees. "You think?"

"No use in worrying, man. Just makes shit worse," He'd learned that lesson.

"I just want her to be okay," he said, sounding far smaller than he actually was. "You know?"

Steve sighed. "Yeah. I do,"

Mike looked at him with genuine interest and said in a much stronger voice "So is this how it feels? When you love someone?"

"You can't really compare how I feel about Nancy to how you feel about Eleven. My situation is just pathetic - I love her, she doesn't love me. Yours is . . . Eleven's just gone. She'd be with you if she was here,"

"How do you deal with that then?" Mike questioned. "Loving someone who doesn't love you back?"

If it were anyone else, Steve would've thought that they were just asking him these things to torture him. Mike was far too kind for that though. "You just . . . hurt. Sorry, maybe you were expecting some kind of profound advice but I don't have any. You just have to find something to distract yourself,"

Mike chuckled. "And yours is monster hunting?"

"Well, it's better than like . . . coke," Steve laughed and Mike laughed along with him, leaning his head back against the bus. "But seriously though, Mike. Get some sleep,"

Mike eyed him cautiously. Steve thought about Mike as a person, and tried to think about what he needed to hear in order to calm him down. If Nancy were here, she probably would've just thrown her shoe at him or something and demanded he shut his eyes. But Steve wasn't Nancy, and he wasn't Mike's brother. Mike definitely didn't want to be scolded, but he probably also didn't want for Steve to ignore him completely. He was the type of person who liked comfort, he liked kindness, he liked all that cheesy shit that Steve didn't. But Steve was going to have to do all of that if he wanted the boy to get any sleep.

"Mike, we're gonna find Eleven. We're gonna find her because you're a good person and you deserve to find her. But for right now, you need to sleep. Being tired isn't going to solve anything –"

"Then you should sleep too," said Mike, concerned.

"I'm fine. I get enough sleep, trust me," Steve dismissed, knowing damn well that was a lie. He hadn't had a good night's sleep in a year. "But I need you to at least try and get some rest. I'm keeping watch. I'll wake you guys up if anything happens. I promise, okay?"

Mike visibly softened and he paused for a moment, like he was examining Steve for any sign of insincerity. He didn't find it. The boy simply nodded and climbed up onto the seat next to him. Steve relaxed, moving to the driver's seat himself. He'd probably have a better view of outside here, anyway.

"Steve?" Mike's voice echoed towards him.

"Yeah?"

"You're a good guy and I was wrong about you. I'm – I'm sorry,"

I'm not. You were right. He didn't say it, though. He kept the truth swallowed down and instead just smiled over at Mike. "Well, if there's anyone who'd know what a good guy looks like, it's you,"

His response obviously pleased Mike, who smiled and then turned over, curling into himself and shutting his eyes.

The next couple of hours were the only calm that Steve had seen in

a while. The shadows still loomed outside and they weren't exactly safe, but for whatever reason, he felt like they were. He felt like nothing would be able to hurt these kids with him around. Well, he didn't really feel it. He thought it and he meant it. He would fucking die before he let any of them get hurt, whether they knew that or not.

It was what he was meant to do.

2. max

When Max had first met Steve Harrington, she'd been positive that her heart was going to beat out of her chest. (According to Mike, that was the reaction that all girls had around him). Every time the older boy asked her to do something or gave her any sort of praise, she found herself lighting up – twirling her hair around her finger and smiling wider than she ever did around the others. It annoyed Dustin and Lucas for obvious reasons and made Mike gag each time, but Max couldn't help it. Boys who looked like Steve were only supposed to exist on television.

But the more she got to know Steve, she realized that he wasn't really all that cool. He was just as big of a dork as Dustin (if that was possible) and it was all just masked by a pretty face. And then her crush disappeared and Max felt major embarrassment that she'd ever been interested in him. She punched Mike in the arm every time he brought it up to spite her.

One thing she could say about Steve that hadn't changed since meeting him was that she admired him. He had this sort of effortless bravery and charm that Max envied and tried desperately to emulate. Everything about him was so confident – he seemed to always know what he was doing, even if he really didn't. He'd gotten everyone to trust him by just his word, and Max wished that she could be like that. It felt like no one ever cared about her opinion, no matter how hard she tried to speak her mind. Everyone just sort of brushed her off because “Ugh, she's such a bitch” or “She's fucking crazy.” Steve listened to her though. He made her feel special, like she mattered.

“What do you think, Mad Max? What's the game plan?” he'd ask her while Lucas, Dustin and Mike argued. And then she'd tell him whatever it is that she thought and he'd actually take it into consideration. No one else had ever treated her like that.

But here she was now, and Steve wasn't here to make her feel valid. He and the boys had left the Byers' home after receiving a phone call from Hopper about one of the entrances they'd found. Steve had instructed her to wait here for Nancy and Jonathan and it had made her feel important, like he trusted her to hold things down for him in

his absence. But instead of Nancy and Jonathan, the person she opened the front door to was Billy.

Billy, the person she was most afraid of. Billy, the person who left her frozen in fear every time he walked past year. Billy, the person who'd terrorized her for her entire childhood. She was immediately speechless.

Billy slammed the door behind him and Max took a few steps back.

Fuck. Why had she opened the fucking door?

"Where your boyfriends at, short stop?" he asked her in that condescending voice. Max said nothing.

"They realize you're a cunt who's not worth the energy?" he giggled as if something was funny and Max felt a lump form in her throat. She'd gotten used to her step-brother taunting her and treating her like shit years ago, but that didn't stop it from hurting. And it certainly didn't stop her from being terrified of him. "You got nothing to say now, Maxine? I bet you'd have a lot to say to Harrington,"

You don't even deserve to say his name, Max thought to herself. She was far too weak to express anything out loud. She knew she must look like a fucking pussy, shaking the way that she was.

"Where are they then? Where the fuck are they?"

"Who?" Max managed out, even though she knew damn well who he was talking about.

"That queer Byers. Harrington. That skank he's always with," Billy smirked. "You know, before she dumped his ass of course,"

Max wanted to cry. She wanted to sob, run and hide. Lock herself in her room and hide under her bed like she would at home. But something inside of her told her that that wasn't how this was going to go. "Tell me," Billy took another step closer to her.

"I – I don't know," she said.

"You know you're not supposed to lie to me,"

“I’m not lying,” she lied.

Billy chuckled, but it quickly turned into an evil sounding cackle. And then his face grew stern. “You tell me right fucking now,”

Max did nothing. *Go to your happy place*, she told herself. It wasn’t working.

And before she knew it, Billy had lunged at her, wrapping his hand around her neck and throwing her up against the wall. She was too petrified to scream for help, to beg him. All she could do was look at him and pray that he was bluffing. Billy took her left hand and raised it next to her head. “I’ll tell you what I’m gonna do. Every moment you waste lying to me, I’m gonna break one of your fingers,”

She let out a strained sob.

“That’s how it’s gonna be, huh?” Billy’s hot breath felt inhumane on her skin. He took her pinky into his grubby fingers and squeezed. “Bye bye,”

Max closed her eyes, awaiting the pain that was coming.

But then she was falling to the ground, suddenly able to breathe again. Her eyes opened to see Billy on the floor and Steve standing above him – it was obvious that her step-brother had just been punched. Lucas, Dustin and Mike were next to her within seconds, helping her stand up. Their voices all sounded the same to her, she couldn’t focus on anything except for Steve and Billy.

Billy stood up, his lips turning into a wicked grin. “You really shouldn’t have done that, Harrington,”

He punched Steve square in the jaw and Steve toppled over. Billy caught him though, so he could hold him in his arms as he savagely beat into his stomach. Steve attempted to fight back, trying to push him away but it seemed to be no use. Billy was obviously stronger and a much better fighter. Lucas attempted to lunge forward at him, but Dustin held him back, knowing that the sadistic man would just end up beating him too. Max couldn’t even feel Mike’s hands on her waist, keeping her steady anymore. She started screaming then, her

voice hoarse from Billy's chokehold. "GET OFF OF HIM! LEAVE HIM ALONE!"

Billy turned to her, smiling. Steve got in a single punch before Billy threw him to the floor, holding his head down and pinning his arms behind his back. He sat on top of him and beat the sides of his head over and over.

"PLEASE! BILLY! STOP! PLEASE STOP! PLEASE!" Max yelled, sobbing now. It was no use, but she didn't know what else to do. She'd always been so afraid of Billy, she'd never stood up to him before. She didn't know what it was like to ask him for anything, to plead with him.

But Steve was more important to her than her fear.

That's why she broke away from Mike's grip and jumped for the stray nailed bat tilted against the wall next to the front door. Dustin screamed for her to stop, but Max ignored him. She'd never seen or thought so clearly in her life. *Protect Steve.*

And then before Lucas, Dustin and Mike could do anything, Max had bashed the bat to Billy's back, knocking him over. Steve flipped over instantly, his nose and the sides of his head bleeding. Max didn't have time to focus on that though, all that mattered was getting her revenge. She hit Billy again, this time square in the stomach as he rolled over to try and stand up. It was an unloading of years of abuse and resentment and if Max was in a better state of mind, she would've felt proud of herself for finally standing up to her bully. But at the moment, all she could do was keep hitting him.

Dustin went to Steve finally, helping him up as he stumbled and spit blood out of his mouth. "Are you okay?" asked the boy.

"Max . . ." Steve coughed out. "Max . . ."

Lucas and Mike quickly got the memo, grabbing Max's arms and pulling her away from Billy. The bat dropped to the floor and Max yelped, kicking her feet and trying to escape, hysterical. "LET GO OF ME! LET GO OF ME!"

"Calm down," said Mike. "You can't kill him!"

Billy finally stood up, clearly struggling as his back appeared to be broken (at the very least). Still, he refused to cry out in pain – it would make him look weak. He limped towards the door, throwing up a pointed finger at Max. “I’ll be back for you, you crazy bitch,”

Lucas picked up the bat and held it up. “You come near her and I’ll fucking kill you,”

Billy attempted to spit in Lucas’s face, but he was still too far away. He backed out of the house, not bothering to close the door behind him. Max continued shouting and kicking, unable to control any part of her. Billy could be a psycho for years, so why couldn’t she be for a few moments? Why was Billy allowed to hurt everyone she cared about and continuously get away with it? Why couldn’t she just hurt him *one time* and get away with it?

The words coming out of her mouth were inaudible and she herself didn’t even know what she was saying. She slammed the back of her head against Mike, making him let go of her instantly. And then she continued sobbing, ripping down Will’s drawings from the walls and tearing them into pieces. The boys looked terrified of her, she’d never seen them look that way before.

Dustin was pleading with her to stop. Lucas was speechless. Mike looked like he was going to cry. Steve brushed some of the blood dripping on to his eyelids away, and tentatively stepped forward. He looked like a knight, a warrior, so much less like the prince that he normally resembled. Max let out a loud scream as she kicked at the Byers’ stove, trying to break it. She just needed to break *something*.

“Max,” said Steve, cautiously. “Max, it’s okay,”

She didn’t hear him. She couldn’t hear anything but the thumping noise in her ears.

“Max, I’m right here . . . Max, look at me,” Steve was afraid to touch her, but held out his hand regardless, hoping that she would take it. Max went for the dining room next, grabbing one of the chairs and lifting it over her head. “Max, Max, Max, I’m here,”

Mike gasped at the sight, obviously afraid that she would seriously

injure herself or somebody else. At the noise, Steve put his hand on Max's shoulder. All he wanted to do was sleep, his head hurt so fucking bad. He felt like he was going to topple over any second. Max finally turned to him when she felt his hand on her. Her face was bright red, tears staining her cheeks.

"Max . . ." Steve's voice was quiet, gentle. "You're okay. You're okay. I'm here. Okay? I'm so sorry I left you. I never should've left you. I won't do that again. I'll never let him hurt you again," he paused, searching Max's eyes. "Okay? I'm so, so, so sorry. But I need you to stop this, okay? You don't want to hurt your friends. I know that you don't. You're a strong girl, I know that. God, you could take this whole place apart,"

A playful smile appeared on his face, hoping to remind her of some humanity. Max's arms shook and her lip quivered, like she was on the verge of breaking down again. "Max, listen to me . . . I promise this won't happen again. I will always, *always* protect you. Believe me, okay? Please? I will never let *anything* happen to you,"

Max's arms lowered and Steve took the chair, placing it back on the ground. Within seconds, she was crying once more, less hysterical this time. This time it was coherent, clear. Steve gently pulled her to him, holding her head to his chest. Max leaned into it instantly, wrapping her arms around him and continuing to sob. She didn't know what she would've done if anything happened to Steve, and she didn't know how to convey that to him. She never spoke about her feelings. Ever.

Mike, Dustin and Lucas relaxed and sat down in unison on the couch.

Steve placed his head on top of Max's, rubbing her back soothingly.

He wanted to thank her for saving his life back there but he felt weak. He felt like a fucking idiot for not being able to fight, despite how hard he'd tried to be in the past year. And he'd known that Billy was crazy. He'd told Nancy months ago that he was crazy. And they finally get into a fight and he loses.

Fucking pathetic.

Later that night, once Nancy and Jonathan and Joyce and Hopper are all home, Max is tucked into Joyce's bed. She's not crying anymore but she's still emotional. She hasn't moved more than a few inches away from Steve in hours and she wouldn't even look at Lucas when he held her hand. But then around midnight, when Hopper insisted that the kids get some sleep, Max pulled Steve aside.

Awkwardly, she crossed her arms over her chest. "Can you, um, can you . . ."

Steve knew her well enough to know what she was going to ask. "Yeah, of course,"

Max made her way to Joyce's bedroom and closed the door. She smiled to herself, feeling safer than she had in a long time. Steve sat down on the floor on the other side of the wall, holding an icepack to his head. This was the first time that he'd felt needed in a long time.

Notes for the Chapter:

i didnt spell check this bc im lazy but i love steve/
max im soft

Author's Note:

i adore steve and i'm so so excited for his s2
storyline! joe is so good with the kids and you know
they wrote this storyline specifically because of that
:)
please leave a review!